

Regional Homelessness: Services Category

The purpose of this document is to offer a range of actions communities can consider as they participate in the regional response to homelessness. Additional refinements to these tactics will include measurable outcomes and the identification of possible funding sources and partners as the action plan is developed, refined with stakeholder input, and offered for action in the fall of 2021.

The document includes both strategies and draft tactics for consideration. The strategies were adopted by the MAG Regional Council on May 26, 2021, with additional support from the MAG Management Committee, the MAG Human Services Community Initiatives Committee, and the Maricopa Regional Continuum of Care Board. Local providers and key stakeholders participated in weekly strategy sessions to propose the following draft “tactics” (next steps) as options for implementing each strategy. These tactics will be reviewed at the June 10 Capstone Event and further refined with continued, collaborative stakeholder input.

As the draft tactics are reviewed, please consider the following questions:

- Which of these tactics are underway now?
- Which resonate the most with you?
- How might you help move these tactics forward?
- What are we missing?

Lead agencies are noted as applicable for each strategy when the work is already underway. If the work is not yet underway, lead agencies will be identified as part of the process to develop the action plan.

Strategy/Lead	Potential Tactics
Evaluate and Enhance the Coordinated Entry System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a detailed scope of work for the Coordinated Entry System evaluation (CES) to collect and analyze quantitative data from HMIS and other sources, and qualitative data from consumer and provider focus groups, key informant interviews, and stakeholder surveys to identify strengths and gaps in the CES. This analysis builds on the work already done for the 2021 Racial Equity Analysis and other processes. Focus on key questions, including:

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Lead: Maricopa Association of Governments with the Coordinated Entry Lead Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What are the gaps in system access, including geography and subpopulation? Who is not entering the CES and/or receiving an assessment and why? What are the opportunities to better ensure everyone experiencing homelessness is entering the system?○ What are the gaps in assessment administration, including equity, quality control, and consistency across the region -- how are assessment scores distributed and potentially impacted by factors other than a household's need/vulnerability?○ What are the gaps in program matching? What are the opportunities to strengthen expediency and appropriateness of program referrals and enrollment to improve effective use of supportive housing resources and other services?○ What are the opportunities to strengthen overall system integration, including diversion/problem solving, landlord engagement, flexible funding, and maximize participation of permanent housing programs across the region?● Using the recommendations from the analysis, strengthen the effectiveness of the system to optimize effective and equitable uses of resources, and expedite households in exiting homelessness, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Apply the lessons learned from COVID-19 to continue effective strategies in the post-COVID system.○ Improve the data infrastructure to adequately assess the needs of the system, including regularly assessing system inflows and outflows, and ensuring the process is collecting sufficient data to track and evaluate system outcomes, impacts, and disparities.○ Enhance coordination, communication, and collaboration across the entry points, assessment, matching, referral and enrollment stakeholders, and across the two Coordinated Entry Systems for single individuals and families.○ Increase access to safe and diverse CE sites and develop alternatives to physical access points through virtual and telephonic options.○ Address racial disparities in the CES, applying strategies from national models to ensure racial equity in coordinated tools and processes. Conduct focus groups and listening sessions with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds to solicit their
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	<p>input on how to create a more accessible, responsive system. Potential strategies could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revise Continuum of Care (CoC) policies and procedures to center racial equity. ▪ Examine efforts by communities across the country to replace or augment the VI-SPDAT¹. ▪ Involve people with lived experience in the redesign process. ▪ Develop strategies to expand access for people of color to the coordinated entry system. ▪ Design and implement new intake tools and processes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expand culturally specific outreach to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) residents to engage them in housing and services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the evaluation and enhancement of the CES with other priority strategies, including strategies for addressing racial equity data collection and analysis, coordinating the COVID-19 Relief Funding, pursuing diversion work, developing housing flexible funding, and forming multisector partnerships.
<p>Expand and Coordinate Employment Assistance and Services Available to People Experiencing Homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand connections to existing employment assistance resources for households experiencing homelessness or who have recently exited homelessness by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mapping the community assets and services available for employment assistance. ○ Creating a regional housing and employment resources inventory. ○ Deepening connections between rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing providers and employment assistance services. ○ Expanding co-located employment assistance at day centers, temporary and permanent housing programs, and other locations targeted to work with people experiencing homelessness. • Enhance access to existing services by people at risk, experiencing, or recently experiencing homelessness by:

¹ Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Prescreen Tool used to screen people experiencing homelessness.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Deepening partnerships with employment service entities to address barriers to serving people experiencing or recently experiencing homelessness, including training for staff.○ Integrate essential services to enable participants to access employment assistance, by providing funding for transportation, language access, and childcare.○ Establish systems for tracking data and outcomes in access to employment services for target population and use the data to identify needs and equity across subpopulations such as BIPOC, youth, and persons with disabilities.○ Engage with the Workforce Development Board, including inviting workforce development stakeholders to serve on the CoC Board, committees, and workgroups. Advocate to include homeless service partners and people with lived experience of homelessness on the Workforce Development Board.● Establish partnership housing and workforce initiatives, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Partnerships with the business community and government agencies to increase job opportunities for people experiencing or recently homeless, including persons with disabilities.○ Regional coordination via a regionwide workgroup to engage representatives and key stakeholders across geographies to share information about ongoing projects, create opportunities to collaborate, apply best practices across the region, and strategize and engage in advocacy.○ Partnerships with the Workforce Board to dedicate resources to a housing/employment pilot program.● Coordinate development of the employment assistance with other priority strategies, including housing flexible funding, landlord engagement, multisector partnerships and all strategies for temporary housing.
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